



(Photo by Sgt. Raymond Kokel, 1-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Generating Coalition Presence

Soldiers of the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment move a generator that will provide electricity for their newly-established combat outpost, dubbed "COP Cobra," near Taji, Iraq May 21.

U.S., Iraqi Security Forces, Locals Clash with Extremists in Ameriyah

MND-B Public Affairs

CAMPLIBERTY, Iraq - Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers and Iraqi Security Forces have been conducting operations against extremists in the western Baghdad Ameriyah District May 31 - June 1.

"In the past several days we have been involved in operations with the Iraqi Army and local nationals against al-Qaeda in Ameriyah," said Lt. Col. Dale Kuehl, commander of 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, whose unit operates in the area. "This started as a popular uprising on Wednesday (May 30) by the locals who are tired of the violence that al-Qaeda has brought to the neighborhood."

Kuehl said the host nation residents, dubbed the "Baghdad Patriots" by Soldiers

from 1-5th Cavalry, took up arms after an attack on a mosque May 31.

"Al-Qaeda used heavy weapons, to include machine guns and RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades) against the mosque," he said. "We came to the aid of the locals at the mosque and have been gathering information from them to help us with future operations."

"Ameriyah is one of several areas in Baghdad, including Fadl and Adhamiyah, where the citizens are challenged by al-Qaeda in Iraq," said Brig. Gen. Vincent K. Brooks, deputy commanding general for support with the Multi-National Division - Baghdad.

Ameriyah residents taking up arms

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Baghdad in Brief

Paratroopers Uncover Cache

BAGHDAD - Paratroopers with the 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team uncovered a weapons cache north of Sadr City, in the eastern portion of the Iraqi capital June 1.

A tip from a local citizen led the Soldiers to the cache. It was found in an area known to locals as the "Jaish Al Mahdi Forbidden Zone," where some rockets attacks on Baghdad's International Zone have originated.

The cache contained 20 107mm rocket warheads, three fully assembled 107mm rockets, one 60mm mortar and a sandbag full of blasting devices.

An explosive ordnance disposal team arrived soon after the discovery was made and conducted a controlled demolition of the cache.

Ameriyah Residents Join Fight Against Terrorists

Fighting Back

From Page 1

against al-Qaeda have reported killing three extremists in running battles in the western Baghdad neighborhoods, Kuehl said. He said things quieted down June 1.

"There were no exchanges of fire today, however we did find one large cache and detained two suspected Al Qaeda fighters in another location," Kuehl said. "I believe today was relatively quiet as Al Qaeda is regrouping."

A curfew has been in effect for more than a week in Ameriyah.

"A curfew has been in effect in Ameriyah for about ten days from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m." said Lt. Col. John Reynolds, the executive officer for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, and the parent unit for 1-5th Cavalry in Baghdad. "The curfew was set by the Iraqi security forces to disrupt the enemy's ability to

"Al-Qaeda is not in control of Ameriyah."

**Lt. Col. Dale Kuehl,
Commander of 1-5 Cav.**

reinforce the area with personnel and munitions. The curfew does not pertain to civil emergency vehicles and allows for essential service work crews to assist as needed."

The Baghdad Patriots provided captured intelligence on a bomb-making cell in the area to 1-5th Cavalry June 1.

The battalion sent an explosive ordnance disposal team along with a security element and support from Iraqi Security

Forces to assess and secure the weapons cache. After careful examination, the Coalition troops partnered with the 2nd Battalion, 1st Regiment, 6th Iraqi Army, uncovered 20 60mm mortar shells, five 120 mm mortar shells and four pipe bombs. There were also numerous bags of homemade explosive material, lying around in an unstable manner.

The EOD team decided that it was too dangerous to remove the material and a controlled detonation was initiated to destroy the IEDs rather than attempt to recover them.

"Al-Qaeda is not in control of Ameriyah," Kuehl said.

"They have had a major influence in the area for a long time using fear and intimidation to keep locals quiet."

Kuehl said the rise of armed Iraqi residents taking on al-Qaeda simply shows that local citizens are tired of the violence and intimidation by extremist groups.

"Al-Qaeda in Iraq is standing in the way of Sunni participation in the government and improving conditions in Iraq," Brooks said. "They're standing in the way of peace and progress, and this turn of events against al-Qaeda demonstrates that some of the Iraqi people have had enough of al-Qaeda's treachery."



Arabic Phrase of the Day

suwa

**Defined:
together**

Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 110
Low: 80



Tomorrow

High: 110
Low: 78



Monday

High: 110
Low: 78

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"Closing the Loop"

Earning, Maintaining Trust of Iraqi Residents

By Sgt. Mike Pryor
2-82 Abn. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - It's the usual happy chaos when 1st Lt. Josh Rowan arrives at neighborhood advisory council member Abu Muhanned's house for their weekly meeting - children running amuck in the yard, women crowded into the kitchen, and Muhanned standing in the doorway in pajamas and bare feet, a cigarette in one hand, jabbering into his cell phone.

He greets Rowan warmly and ushers him and his Soldiers inside his home nestled in eastern Baghdad's Adhamiyah District. While a security team sets up on the roof, Rowan and Muhanned move to the living room to talk. By now, it's a familiar routine.

Muhanned's house was the destination of Rowan's very first patrol in Iraq, almost four months ago, and they have met regularly ever since to plan development projects for the area.

Today, however, will be Rowan's last visit. Rowan, a platoon leader with 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, from College Station, Texas, is moving to a different job. The purpose of this final meeting was to introduce Muhanned to his replacement, 1st Lt. Jeremy Tillman, of Walnut Ridge, Ark.

"All I'm here to do is introduce Tillman and close the loop," Rowan said.

In the Army, the only constant is change. Soldiers are always moving from one position to another and taking over



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2-82 Abn. Public Affairs)

Walnut Ridge, Ark., native 1st Lt. Jeremy Tillman, a new platoon leader with Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, gathers information from a local shopkeeper during a night patrol through a neighborhood in Baghdad's Adhamiyah District May 20.

different duties. But in Iraq, the challenge for new leaders like Tillman is, how do you take over a relationship? Rowan and Muhanned worked successfully together because they had a strong personal bond. Tillman will have to build that trust all over again.

"That's the challenge of counter-insurgency warfare," Rowan said.

Over tea and cigarettes at Muhanned's house, Rowan made a big show of introducing Tillman.

"Sir, I look forward to working with you," Tillman told Muhanned, when Rowan was done.

"I will put my hand in your hand. You will protect me, and I will protect you," Muhanned replied.

The meeting continued for almost two hours. One minute

they were talking about putting trash cans on the street corners, the next minute about a trip Muhanned's son was planning and the next about security threats in the area. In between, Muhanned's wife served a huge lunch.

When the meeting was over, Tillman said it had been an eye-opening experience. At his previous unit, the focus had been almost entirely on raids and kinetic operations. Tillman could only remember a few times when he had actually sat in an Iraqi's house and talked.

"Here, they're interacting. They're constantly getting out there and talking to local leaders," Tillman said. "The mindset is just totally different."

"People are moving here from other parts of Baghdad because they say this is a safe

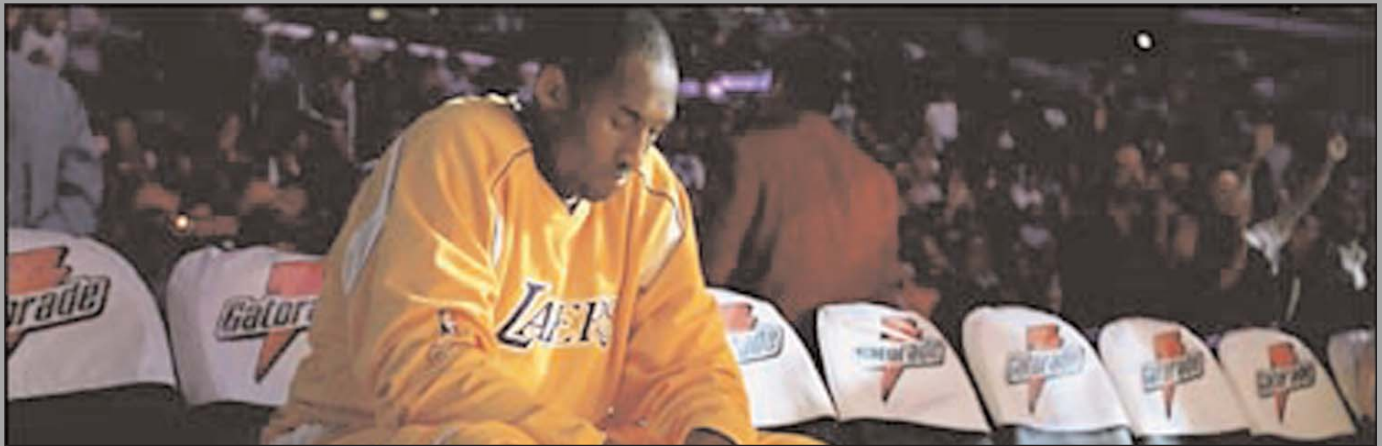
place," Rowan told his platoon members just before his last patrol with them. "It's the little things that we are doing that are making a difference."

In the end, it all boils down to personal relationships, said Capt. Jonathan Harvey, Rowan and Tillman's battery commander.

"You have to be very delicate in the hand over," said Harvey, of Nebraska City, Neb. "Iraqi culture is big on trust."

Harvey said he made sure Tillman had plenty of time to shadow Rowan and meet one on one with all his Iraqi counterparts.

Despite the introductions and the crash course he received on Adhamiyah's kaleidoscopic array of political and religious groups and their rivalries, Tillman said he still has a lot to learn.



(Photo courtesy of BBC Sports)

Los Angeles Lakers Kobe Bryant sits on the bench before taking on the Philadelphia 76ers in California

Kobe Bryant: Basketball's best or ball hog bust?

Kobe Bryant's career is over. Sure, he will continue to rack up stats that will help him go down as one of the greatest players of all time. But, he is stuck in Los Angeles with the Lakers and a mediocre team, at best. After the week of frustration in which he demanded a trade, then recanted, he brought to light the frustrations of knowing he lost his best chances of winning another title when "the Diesel" left town.

We all know Kobe wants to go down as the greatest player of all time. He has said so himself. He has three championship rings and is still only 28 years old. He still has five or six of his best years left in the tank. But scoring titles alone won't put him in the pantheon with greats such as Michael Jordan, Bill Russell, Shaquille O'Neal, or even Tim Duncan.

O'Neal has four titles now. Duncan is about a month away from claiming his fourth. We all know what Jordan and Russell did. Kobe, on the other hand, will have to settle with his three rings.

Not too long ago, the Lakers were a dynasty. They had won three straight titles. Even though they lost what would have been their fourth straight championship to the Detroit Pistons, they still had the best nucleus in the National Basketball Association. As long as you have the best all-around player in the league, Kobe, and the most dominant big man to ever play the game, Shaq, you have a championship contender.

After losing to the Pistons, though,

Bryant did whatever he could to push O'Neal out of the door. Kobe wanted his own team and wanted to win a championship on his terms.

He didn't want to be anyone's sidekick. He wanted to take a team of role players and win a championship with them. Kind of like a certain player did in the '90s; six times.

What Kobe didn't realize is that O'Neal was his best shot at winning another title. Of course, O'Neal went on to win last year's title with the Miami Heat, and will have a shot to make a run next year also. O'Neal still has a couple of good years left in him and knows how to pace himself for a playoff run. His skills have diminished over the last few years, but he is still the best center in the league, by far.

So instead of having O'Neal anchoring the Lakers, Kobe has to deal with over-rated players like Lamar Odom, Smush Parker and Chris Mihm. The trade that sent O'Neal to Miami has already gone down as one of the worst of all time. The Lakers got no real talent in return.

Kobe is now at a crucial point in his career. The Lakers have a little room to go after free agents, but playing in the dominating Western

Conference demands more than having a couple of good players on a team. To get past teams like the Utah Jazz,

Phoenix Suns and San Antonio Spurs, you have to have depth, and veterans who know how to win. Kobe is stuck on a team with players who have never been truly playoff tested. There is no way he can win with his current team. Even if they pull a blockbuster trade and land Jason Kidd, Kevin Garnett, or Jermaine O'Neal, it still won't be

enough to put them over the top.

The Lakers will have to make every move they can to bring the players needed to make a run at a championship. While L.A. is an attractive place for free agents to sign, whoever decides to will have to be Kobe's sidekick. There aren't too many big-time free agents out there who want that. Kobe will just have to wait it out until his contract runs out, and then bolt for a legitimate contender.

Kobe is every bit as talented as Jordan. But, Jordan made his teammates better. At best, Kobe will win one more championship, which will put him two behind Jordan on the list. So, for now, Jordan still remains the greatest player of all time. Kobe, on the other hand, will look back and wonder what could have been.

(Background courtesy of www.thekobedebate.com)

Trigger Pull



Pfc. Benjamin Gable